CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method of keeping a refreshed image from a camera on a user's
2   system, the method comprising:
3   sending the image to the user's system;
4   refreshing the image periodically; and
5   after a period of time, degrading the image.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the degrading comprises reducing
2   an image size.

1   3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the degrading comprises
2   decreasing resolution.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2   determining if it is time to degrade the image; and
3   if it is time to degrade the image, degrading the image.

1   5.   The method of claim 4, wherein determining if it is time to degrade
2   the image comprises determining that a set time has elapsed.

1   6.   The method of claim 4, wherein determining if it is time to degrade
2   the image comprises determining that a window displaying the image is not
3   visible to the user.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the determination whether to
2   degrade the image is periodically evaluated.

1   8.   The method of claim 7, wherein a period to evaluate the
2   determination whether to degrade the image is greater than a refresh period of
3   the image.

1   9.   The method of claim 7, wherein the determination whether to
2   degrade the image occurs concurrently with a refresh cycle.

1   10.   The method of claim 9, wherein if the determination indicates that
2   the image should be degraded, upon refresh, the degraded image is loaded.

1   11.   The method of claim 7, wherein the determination whether to
2   degrade the image is made when a timer reaches a preset value.

1   12.   The method of claim 7, wherein a determination whether it is time
2   to degrade the image is made when a counter reaches a preset value.

1   13.   An apparatus comprising:
2   a network connection to send an image to a user's system;
3   a refresh logic to periodically refresh the image; and
4   a degrading logic to degrade the image after a period of time.

1   14.   The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the degrading comprises
2   reducing an image size.

1   15.   The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the degrading comprises
2   decreasing resolution.

1   16.   The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

2   an activity monitor to determine if it is time to degrade the image; and

3   if it is time to degrade the image, the refresh rate logic to degrade the

4   image.

1   17.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the degrading logic determines

2   if it is time to degrade the image by determining whether a set time has elapsed.

1   18.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the activity monitor determines

2   if it is time to degrade the image by determining whether a window displaying

3   the image is visible to the user.

1   19.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein if the degrading logic

2   determines that the image should be degraded, upon refresh, the refresh logic

3   loads a degraded image.

1   20.   The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising a quality increase

2   request monitor to reset the image to its original refresh rate upon detecting a

3   request.

1   21.   The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the request is made by the user.